FUNDAMENTALISTS AND MODERNISTS

C. J. SÖDERGREN

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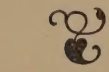
BY

C. J. SÖDERGREN



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"There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and no kind is without signification." *1 Cor. 14:10.*

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I. INTRODUCTION.

IN THE days of Christ there were two prominent religious parties, the *Pharisees and the Sadducees.*

The *Herodians* were a *political* party. They were the supporters of the dynasty of Herod and therefore the professional "patriots" of the day. They were closely allied commercially with the Sadducees, the great financiers of Jerusalem. Because they realized in Jesus a foe of their political aims and money revenues, they made common cause with the Pharisees to crush Him. They found it impossible to tolerate His infringement of the vested rights of the merchants and bankers in the temple courts. We are therefore not surprised to find them figuring with this powerful party in the attempt to entrap Him in the matter of tribute to Cæsar (Mk. 12. 13).

The *scribes* were a *professional* guild. They were the "Doctors," or Teachers of the Law. In modern terminology they were the theological

professors of the Jewish Church. In Mt. 13. 52 Jesus uses the title in a favorable sense. Ordinarily they took no part in public affairs outside of their special vocation, but devoted themselves to the study and exposition of the Scriptures. Their chief concern was to safeguard the orthodox doctrine, which, however, they amplified and embellished with innovations in a most arbitrary manner. "Orthodox" therefore gradually came to mean their own interpretations and personal opinions, largely determined by individuals of recognized authority in their schools. They were concerned, not so much with Scripture itself, as with what might be called their "Book of Concord," and, again, not so much with their body of doctrine, as with the generally accepted and traditional interpretation of these confessions. It was this latter interpretation which became the "heavy and grievous burdens" which they bound and laid on men's shoulders (Mt. 23. 4). On any subject whatsoever, social, political, scientific, or religious, the fact that these rabbis said so and so was decisive and final. "An offence," they taught, "against the sayings of the scribes is worse than one against those of Scripture" (Sanh. XI. 3). Their students had only two duties: to retain everything faithfully in their memory; and never to teach otherwise, even in expression, than

they had been taught. We also know the inordinate vanity of the profession and what sticklers they were about being properly addressed as "Rabbi." In Mk. 12. 38 Jesus singles them out as an object of warning. "Beware of the scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and to have salutations in the marketplaces, and chief seats in the synagogues, and chief places at feasts" (Lk. 20. 46).

THE PHARISEES.

The Pharisees were the party of the fundamentalists and literalists, in a derogatory sense. They were not "hypocrites" of the type we usually associate with the name, but a group of spiritual leaders, properly designated as "legalistic pietists," quite sincere in their faith, and driven into dissembling only by their reactionary attitude toward Jesus and by the alternative with which He confronted them and which they refused to accept. In this they were entirely consistent, because from their point of view He was a rank liberalist of the order that "hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel." That is, they were sincerely false. They believed that they alone were in the right. They believed in the Bible. They were orthodox in doctrine. They were staunch defenders of the faith. The theology elaborated

by their theologians was in their opinion infallible. It could never be altered. On anything that seemed to threaten its foundations they turned with swift resentment. Woe unto the man who as much as questioned the tradition of the elders or doubted their interpretation!

History has proven them to be in the wrong. They themselves were unable to see it. The reason was that they mistook the form for the substance. They clung to a dead body and did not notice that its spirit had fled. They were too conservative to leave the old camping ground and follow the pillar of cloud and fire a stage nearer the promised land. Consequently they kept their faces stolidly and stubbornly fixed toward the cherished past. And when prophets sent from God urged them to ascend the mountain heights of a fuller revelation, they turned on them and rent them. Of course they went through the formality of heresy trials, but this was mere pretence. They were agreed on the verdict in advance.

The observance of the Sabbath, for instance, must be kept at all costs, according to their own strictly literal interpretation and detailed application of the commandment. If it happened to be honored in the breach by Christ Himself or by some healed paralytic, they promptly condemned

these non-conformists as "sinners" and went serenely on tithing mint and anise and cummin, leaving undone the weightier matters of the law, namely, justice, mercy, and faith. And if some Nicodemus in their own circle or a restored blind man presumed to question the wisdom of their policies or the justice of their course, he was promptly "bawled out" or thrown out.

While professing to honor the prophets of the past, they proved their "false sincerity" by persecuting the new prophets. For such a religion is always harsh and cruel. Partly because a faith that is a matter of the head, and not of the heart and life, is always merciless and ruthless when opposed or crossed. Partly because it feels insecure and afraid, and finds it expedient to safeguard its interests by hard-headed and hard-hearted diplomacy. Accordingly, to effect their ends they took the short-cut of force — legal or physical. The smoldering fire which subconsciously inspired their tactics and finally burst into open flame appears in the policy adopted toward Christ and His followers. "Behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city" (Mt. 23. 24). "And they watched him, and sent forth

spies, who feigned themselves to be righteous, that they might take hold of his speech, so as to deliver him up to the rule and the authority of the governor" (Lk. 20. 20). "And when he came out from thence, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press upon him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things, laying wait for him, to catch something out of his mouth" (Lk. 11. 53). "Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out" (Jn. 9. 34). "This man ceaseth not to speak words against this holy place, and the law. . . . They cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him" (Acts 6. 13; 7. 57, 58).

There was indeed a prophet whom they did *not* persecute openly. But the motive is well expressed by themselves, "All the people will stone us, for they are persuaded that John was a prophet" (Lk. 20. 6).

Meanwhile they were persuaded that they had the truth. So why should they trouble themselves with listening to "heresy"? And if occasionally a ray of light pierced the armor of their prejudice, they were keen enough to see that it was impossible to incorporate it with their old system of doctrine and therefore they carefully excluded

it. To change their attitude would have meant a radical spiritual change and a violent intellectual revolution to which they were not equal. They had no desire for the new wine. They said, The old is good (Lk. 5. 39). Because they were undergoing spiritual atrophy they refused to consider the proposition that Jesus might be right and they wrong. The case was closed to argument.

To doubt that they were in possession of the truth was to jeopardize Scripture, the Church, the temple, the nation, their institutions, their standing, and all the interests of the established religion. Hence they felt perfectly warranted in shutting their minds to everything that might tend to undermine the traditions and unsettle their own persuasions. For the same reason they also considered it perfectly legitimate to resort to extreme measures in dealing with individual "apostles of heresy." Indeed they had no other choice if they were to save themselves and their theology. So they adopted the policy of forcible repression, and with a perfectly good conscience. "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you shall think he offereth service unto God" (Jn. 16. 2). Those who refused to submit to their authority

they excommunicated, branded as "sinners," and thanked God they were not like them.

There were moreover good reasons for their complacency. Among their number we find such noble characters as a Nicodemus, a Joseph of Arimathea, a Gamaliel, and especially a Saul, who could say of himself, "As touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless" (Phil. 3. 6). As stated above, they were strict in the observance of the Sabbath, in tithing themselves, and in fasting, even going beyond the requirements of the law. They were imbued with a fiery missionary zeal. Not indeed to make converts to Judaism, but to make proselytes to their own "denomination." What Jesus thought of this kind of missionary enterprise is recorded in Mt. 23. 15. They believed in the immortality of the soul, in angels, in the resurrection of the body, and in future retribution. They believed in the speedy coming of the Messiah through the air. No doubt Satan had this popular theology in mind when he suggested to Jesus that He cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple and so appear to the people as if dropping down out of heaven. They looked for His literal reign upon the earth in Jerusalem. His kingdom was to be a kingdom of the saints, and they were the saints. He was to deliver them from the power of the Gentiles,

especially the Romans, and He was to thrust out the sinners, Sadducees in particular, from the inheritance of God.

All these materialistic notions they backed up with the Bible, and according to their baldly literal reading of prophecy they were in the right. No one was able to dispute it. The possibility of a more spiritual insight into the Word of God simply did not occur to them. They knew. And yet the sad fact remains that when their Messiah did appear, they failed to recognize Him. The Spirit of God had departed from a dying Church, spiritual vision was only a memory and a name, faith had lost its sight, and so they stared at divine truths with the bovine gaze of the natural man, seeing only words.

All sources present the Pharisees to us as a distinct "church within the Church." They did not separate themselves from the Jewish community in doctrine, and they worshiped with their fellow-countrymen in the temple and in the synagogues, but they kept aloof from social intercourse with the "worldly" mass of the people to avoid the risk of being defiled by the less scrupulous. They considered themselves as the real Israelites, Israel according to the spirit, while the common people were the *'am ha' arez,* the vulgar herd. We recall the fault they found with Jesus because of His

friendly intercourse with publicans and sinners. This was enough to condemn Him in their sight. He in turn said to them, "Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and every herb, and pass over justice and the love of God" (Lk. 11. 42). And to His disciples He said, "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Lk. 12. 1).

THE SADDUCEES.

The Sadducees were the liberalists and rationalists of that day. As such they were cordially hated by the Pharisees, and the former reciprocated by thoroughly despising the latter. According to Josephus they accepted the entire Old Testament, and not the Pentateuch only. But this did not prevent them from playing fast and loose with the Scriptures. In fact they were largely indifferent to religion, except as a matter of curious interest, custom, means of preferment, and source of revenue. The tradition of the elders, to which the Pharisees attached supreme importance, the Sadducees disregarded entirely. They rejected the literal interpretation of prophecy. They denied the providence of God and maintained that man was the master of his destiny and the sole author of his own happiness or misery. They denied the existence of angels and

spirits, the resurrection of the dead, and future rewards and punishments. And they had scant sympathy with the Pharisees in their Messianic anticipations.

All this stamped them in the eyes of the people as sceptics and infidels. Their pride and callousness of heart made them still more unpopular, while the Pharisees were held in high regard. The reason why Jesus directed His rebukes mainly against the scribes and Pharisees, and said so little about the Sadducees, was no doubt due to the insignificant influence of the latter in religious matters. And in the final combined attack on Him the Sadducees were doubtless influenced less by religious zeal than by the natural fear that a messianic movement might result in disastrous political consequences. When on one occasion they approached Him on the question of the resurrection, we notice the spirit of levity and their patronizing contempt for Him by adducing the example of the woman who had had seven husbands (Mt. 22. 25).

The leaders among the priests, especially those of the highpriestly family, all belonged to the party of the Sadducees. They were the clerical aristocrats, at the same time that they were frankly irreligious. It was the Sadducees who carried on the traffic in the temple which yielded

such handsome profits to lessors and lessees alike. They were closely allied with the Roman government and were leaders in the Hellenizing of Palestine. After the resurrection of Jesus they were the main instigators of the persecution against the apostles and their followers. Jesus combines them with the Pharisees in the warning to His disciples, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees" (Mt. 16. 6). There was no Pharisee, Sadducee, Herodian, or scribe, among the Twelve.*

The reason for the existence of these parties, and especially the spirit which inspired them, was the spiritual decline and general decay which marked the end of that age. They were desperate attempts at a solution of the problems created by the dissolution of the old order. Each party trusted to its own panacea for curing the ills of the times. But as the leaders were treating symptoms instead of the deeply seated disease, things went steadily from bad to worse. God had moreover "judged" — discarded — the past and was displacing it with a new dispensation. Hence all efforts proved unavailing. Their final attempt to save themselves, the church, the nation, was the crucifixion of Christ. Following hard upon this

* For further information see various monographs on these parties, and the respective articles in the encyclopedias.

summary rejection of their only hope, these parties renewed the old feud, growing ever more hostile and bitter against each other, till their internecine war in the siege of Jerusalem broke down all resistance, delivered the city into the hands of the enemy, and buried them all in the smoking heap of its ruins.

II. DISCUSSION.

THE signs of our own times indicate the approach of a similar situation. The rarer spirits in our midst who sense the invisible undertow in both Church and State are unanimous in the conviction that we are drawing near the end of another dispensation. Symptomatic of the change are corresponding movements, rapidly crystallizing into parallel religious parties. Two main groups are assuming definite shape, already characterized by name as Fundamentalists and Modernists. The following pages are an attempt to analyze these aggregations, with the purpose of assisting the reader to get his bearings and enable him, if possible, to direct his course through shifting winds across a rising sea.

A. THE FUNDAMENTALISTS.

There is an almost infinite variety of these. In the nature of the case it is impossible to define them. And yet the importance of making at least approximate distinctions is becoming more and more evident. One of the main reasons for the

present contribution is a growing realization that the frequent failure to discriminate properly here is a fertile cause of much unnecessary distress of mind and many preventable tragedies. In spirit and tendency, however, there is discernible a Right and a Left, and it will suffice for our immediate purpose to divide them into these two groups.

THE TRUE FUNDAMENTALISTS.

This group adheres to the foundation doctrines of the Christian religion as revealed in the Word of God. In this sense every true Christian is a fundamentalist, and can be nothing else, as these doctrines are the source and content of a saving faith.

Among these fundamental doctrines are the following: the existence of a personal Triune God, the Creator of heaven and earth; the Deity of Jesus Christ; the virgin birth; His atonement for sin by a sinless obedience unto death; regeneration by faith in Him alone as our vicarious sacrifice; His literal resurrection; His second coming; the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church; the divine inspiration of the Old and New Testaments; the reality of heaven and hell; the resurrection of the dead; the judgment of the quick and the dead.

Certainly, a man may believe all these doctrines in his head and still be an unbeliever at heart. The mere fact that he gives intellectual assent to them and professes to accept them is therefore not fundamental. Faith is no mouthing of intellectual creeds. The main question is not, *What* do we believe? but, *In whom* do we believe? Not, Do we have this or that *opinion* about religious matters? but, Do we *believe* (-lieve, lieben, love, trust) in *Christ?* To make five, or seven, or a hundred dogmas the object of faith, instead of a *person,* the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, is a radical departure from the fundamentals of the Christian religion. The Gospel is not merely a gospel *about* Jesus and His teachings; it is the gospel *of* Jesus and the religion of a loving and adoring self-surrender to Him.

A faith that is the incarnation of revealed truth, translated into such a living trust, is not to be belittled; and those who cherish these fundamental doctrines in their hearts and convert them into the obedience of faith are not to be lightly disparaged.

They cannot be eliminated from consideration with impunity. Their voices cannot be safely disregarded. Their testimony must be taken into account and its message heeded if truth is what we desire. The genuine fundamentalist may be

sincerely wrong at times, but even so he merits neither abuse nor condescension. He may only need to realize that there "is more light yet to break out of the Word." To ridicule the work of grace in the hearts of humble, sincere believers as a superstition, a delusion, or the work of the devil, is infamy itself. To scoff at beliefs, "held by sincere and noble men who have achieved noble and sacrificial lives, is to betray a narrowness quite unworthy of religious men. A cheap and easy scepticism has no healing for the woes of civilization. The 'spirit that denies' cannot rescue the broken world from its disillusion and despair. The so-called liberals have sometimes indulged in a scornful treatment of beliefs which have given millions victory over pain and grief and evil, and by such an attitude have strengthened reactionary orthodoxy. Only great beliefs can be the foundation of great character. Only a positive faith can speak with authority and bring us permanent help" (W. H. P. Faunce).

The spiritual instinct of these humble believers senses truth even where ideas and language may at times be at fault. The intuition of the spiritual-minded man is ever truer than all the reason and erudition of mere scholars.

For this very reason the Fundamentalist also may need to be reminded that faith is not fur-

thered merely by using a megaphone or by indulging in viciousness of spirit. Pounding heads with hard doctrines does not plant them in human hearts and make them fruitful in Christian lives. It is also well to learn what Jesus emphasized and to keep things in the same proportion. This is a safer course than to make a hobby of single doctrines and to thrust them out into space in such a manner as to make them high vaulting-bars instead of inviting paths of peace.

One of the truest representatives of this group among noted writers on the subject is A. J. Gresham Machen of Princeton. His latest work, "Christianity and Liberalism," will repay careful reading.

THE PSEUDO-FUNDAMENTALISTS.

This group of Fundamentalists is the spurious kind, which places an entirely unwarranted emphasis on shibboleths not occurring in our accepted creeds, but which have seeped in from the outside and which prove on examination to consist largely of "the commandments of men." We have our authoritative formulas, based on the plain words of Scripture and accepted by the Church as the statement of its Christian faith. The other kind of would-be authority is derived from individual teachers and a certain ill-defined general

consensus of opinion, which has grown into a body of ecclesiastical tradition. And this is the "orthodoxy," which our *pseudo*-fundamentalists are riding like charging cavalry with drawn sabers, bent on destruction.

Some of these doctrines are science falsely so called and are not dangerous, except as they may obstruct spiritual vision and smother budding faith. But some of them are also theological doctrines, so intimately mixed by these fundamentalists with our Canonical Symbols, that it often requires no little acumen and skill to disentangle them. And these are the more dangerous, as we are so easily deluded into accepting them, along with the authoritative teachings, as infallible and final. There are, for instance, certain theories of inspiration constructed and superimposed by individual dogmaticians; a literal interpretation of the Bible so unspiritual as to shut out completely the Spirit of the living Christ; geometrical definitions of the Trinity which foist sheer polytheism on simple and unsuspecting minds; and Jewish conceptions of the Kingdom, past, present, and future, which tend to close the eyes of men to the expanding vistas of a truly prophetic perspective.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

Our own doctrines say very little on Origins and Eschatology (First and Last Things). In this the Reformers showed their wisdom and their humility. In this reticence there is also a source of comfort for those who find themselves unable to accept every fancy and phantasy that floats along on the shifting winds of these latter days. That is, we find that we have a right to our Christian profession, even when we must differ occasionally with some of our brethren and prefer to wait for more light, especially when we sense that some of their theories do not seem to harmonize with the mind and spirit of the Christ we have learned to know and love.

"But you must believe the Bible." Yes, and we do. Perhaps with a faith equally deep. But what these brothers mean is that we must accept *their* particular *exposition* of this, that, or the other Scripture passage. Therefore we feel free to observe that we have an equal right to give a modified answer at times to their "must". We need to be on our guard against being made captives to the opinion of men. It is one thing to "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," while "casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." But it is quite another thing

to allow faith itself to be bound hand and foot by religious "Fascisti," or to be hounded by a group of zealots very much akin in spirit to the Ku Klux Klan.

Even our Symbols profess to be only "witnesses." In their own language, "Other writings (beside the Scriptures) of ancient or modern teachers, whatever reputation they may have, should not be regarded as of equal authority with the Holy Scriptures, but should altogether be subordinated to them, and should not be received other or further than as witnesses as to in what manner and at what places, since the time of the apostles, the doctrine of the prophets was preserved." Again, "The other symbols and writings are not judges, as are the Holy Scriptures, but only a witness and a declaration of the faith, as to how at any time the Holy Scriptures have been understood and explained in articles in controversy in the Church of Christ, by those who then lived, and how the opposite dogma was rejected and condemned." (Formula of Concord, Introd. 1b and 3d). Truly liberal enough in matter and tone, and most refreshing in their spirit, while affording precious testimony to the truth as revealed to us by God in His sacred Word!

The "hundred-percenters," on the other hand, wish to improve upon these witnesses by adding

as of equal authority their own personal opinions and by means of these to keep us under the double guard of a "superior kind"(?) of religious "patriotism." But while we elect to exercise the freedom secured to us by the Protestant Reformation and refuse to be dragged into the dungeons of a new Inquisition, God forbid that our liberty in Christ should prove to be the lawlessness of unbelief. May it prove to be instead a humble loyalty to the truth of His Word and to its glorious echo in the formulated doctrines of our Church, as this truth is accepted by Christian faith, proved by Christian experience, and courageously confessed in word and deed by Christian witnesses to its saving and transforming power!

JUDAISERS.

It may be of value to note in this connection that the spirit which actuates the Pseudo-Fundamentalists with distressing frequency finds a rather remarkable prototype in the so-called Judaisers of the early Christian Church. These extremists originated in "certain of the sects of the Pharisees who believed." For the most part these legalists were sincere believers in the Lord Jesus as the Messiah, and by no means the "hypocrites" it might appear. They merely insisted on the traditional doctrines and demanded with the

fiery zeal of conviction that "it was needful to circumcise them (the Gentile converts) and to charge them to keep the law of Moses" (Acts 15. 5).

Impassioned zeal and the tone of authority are always impressive, and this enthusiasm and self-confidence on their part exerted such influence that several of the churches were brought to the verge of disruption. We get a glimpse of this spirit in 2 Cor. 10. 12, "For we (Paul) are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that commend themselves; but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding." Their propaganda threatened a serious schism in the entire Church and finally made necessary the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem 50 A.D. But though the decree of this council included certain temporary concessions to the Jewish Christian "fundamentalists," many of these reactionaries refused to accept the main conclusion of this "Synodical Meeting." They accused Paul of being a rank "'liberalist," a renegade and a traitor to his people and his God. They dogged his footsteps from city to city, disparaged his character, his apostolic authority, and his teaching. We recall how even Peter was intimidated by their presence in Antioch to compromise

and dissemble, till he stood corrected by the open rebuke of his friend Paul (Gal. 2. 11). Even as late as the latter's first imprisonment in Rome these Judaisers were in evidence and saddened his great heart by their machinations. By this time, however, he was confident that even the vexatious controversies which they occasioned and their "preaching Christ even of envy and strife" would serve to further the Gospel and issue in its final triumph (Phil. 1. 15–19).

The intolerance and persecution evinced by the modern Pseudo-Fundamentalists, inhibits their usefulness. Sane men and women are becoming impatient with those who are so ready to consign to the flames those who do not agree with them in every particular. The attitude which says, "Disagree with me, and you are a crook," is becoming only to a "fuddlementalist." The spirit of the following clipping for instance from *"The Searchlight"* only invites the derision of fair-minded men: "$100 reward. The Searchlight is going to offer a reward. It will deposit in the bank a $100 cashier's check to be given to a student of any denominational college in the south who will supply the Searchlight with evidence that modernism is taught in the school where the said student attends." And the editor promises not to divulge the name of the student, so that the

informer may be kept immune to discipline. The number of "rewards" is limited to twenty.

Such submarine attacks are poor policy, to say nothing of their "Christianity." The following words of Dean Farrar are deserving of serious consideration in this connection: "The worst of all heresies in any Christian, and the heresy that Christ holds as most inexcusable, however commonly and however bitterly it betrays itself in our controversies, is the heresy of hatred. If a man be animated by that spirit — be he the most dreaded champion of his shibboleth, the foremost fugleman of his party — if he be guilty of that heresy, his Christianity is heathenism, and his orthodoxy a cloak of error." Usually too this "odium theologicum" is not the emphasis of conviction, but of persuasion. Often enough, moreover, it is the vociferation of mere opinion, if not indeed the wrath of wounded egotism. Fortunately only a special type is fitted for plying the nefarious trade of religious detective and spy. All honest men will go on their way doing their daily duty, observing rather than aiding and abetting those who enjoy this form of ministration.

We commend for further consideration the language of the twelve points reached by the Language School at Wu Fu Ssu, near Peking, China, as follows:

"1. I will always seek to discover the best and strongest points in my brother's position. 2. I will give him credit for sincerity. 3. I will try to avoid classifying him and assuming that he has all the characteristics of the class to which he is supposed to belong. 4. I will emphasize our agreements. 5. When others criticise I will try to bring out favorable points. 6. When there is misunderstanding, either I of him, or he of me, I will go to him direct. 7. I will seek opportunities to pray together. 8. I will try to remember that I may be mistaken, and that God's truth is too big for my mind. 9. I will never ridicule another's faith. 10. If I have been betrayed into criticising another, I will seek the first opportunity of finding out from himself if my criticism is just. 11. I will not listen to gossip and secondhand information. 12. I will pray for anyone from whom I differ."

LITERALISM.

A serious fault with the Pseudo-Fundamentalists is their crassly literal understanding of the Scriptures. Professing to be spiritual-minded they seem to be strangely lacking in spiritual vision. If this kind of literalism is not actual materialism, it is certainly the vision of a one-eyed faith entirely *sans* vista. The gift of the Spirit should reveal the things of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2. 14). For

that Spirit enables us to see that the thoughts of God cannot be fully expressed in human language and that the grammatical sense cannot exhaust His mind. Scripture is an unfathomable and infinite ocean of truth, as inexhaustible as its divine Author. Only sheer blindness imagines that we can sound its depths with our short plummet. To limit its truth to our finite comprehension also looks like an effort to control it in a small fear that it may get beyond our own control, or like an attempt to make it a mere armory of texts to serve as weapons within our own ready reach for personal offense and defense. Such an attitude takes on the appearance of not being able to trust either God, His Word, or our fellow-Christians out of our sight and to have no faith in anything but our own little views and ingenious designs. He who draws a definite circle around a Scripture passage and sets up the sign "No Trespassing" only reveals his own serious limitations, both spiritually and mentally. He may need besides to be warned not to play the role of the dog in the manger.

We Occidentals must remember that the language of the Bible is Oriental. God did not choose the superficial, prosy, matter-of-fact business tongue of the West. He elected to employ the poetic, figurative, richly colored and musical lan-

guage of the East. We intellectualistic "pale-faces" sem to find it so impossible to view spiritual truth from any other angle than that of our rigid science and precise mathematics. And we are so amusingly conceited about it too.

In limiting themselves, and in the efforts to limit others, to the first surface idea a word suggests, these brethren are most unfortunately identifying themselves with a theory of inspiration which has never been a part of the Christian faith, but which is originally only the doctrine of some spiritually near-sighted dogmaticians. The ancient creeds contain no reference to such a view. Our later creeds say nothing about it. Yet many honest souls are being conscientiously led to believe that the Christian religion stands or falls with this theory. These teachers are no doubt inspired by the purest zeal, but this should not prevent them from pausing to consider whether it is wise and kind to expose their disciples to the danger of losing their *faith* when the *theory* collapses, as collapse it must when shaken by the seismic disturbances of actual findings by modern criticism.

Assuredly what the Bible says is true. But the content is divine and eternal, and not merely temporal and human. It is therefore not to be reduced to the low level and narrow span of our

finite comprehension. If we limit its truth to what we can pack down in our little hand-made band-boxes we are doing nothing less than helping to destroy the very faith we are in the effort to champion and either driving men and women by the tens of thousands into the Liberalist camp or smothering many a future songster by forcing him back into the hard shell of our patent interpretation of the Bible. This is the great crime of every dying church at the end of its period. Again and again, with the very best of intentions, such churches have attempted to exorcize the spirit of doubt by whipping its children to death with the lash of the letter, when possibly there might have been some better way of treating their mental troubles and curing their spiritual ills.

Among the true Fundamentalists we find many literalists who are men of the highest integrity, guileless as the day, and filled with true zeal for the honor of God and the salvation of souls. They are actively and unselfishly engaged in serving the Lord where others stand aloof and even presume to smile at them with a supercilious smile. They are consecrated as well as sanctified and devoted believers in the Lord Jesus. And this after all is the main thing. All else is of secondary importance. But we believe most sincerely that the faith of men to-day and the enlargement of the

borders of the kingdom would be furthered still more in the long run if these spiritual leaders might rise to some of the higher levels which lead up to the view-point of the Teacher who left this re-echo in the hearts of two disciples: "Was not our heart burning within us, while he spoke to us in the way, while he *opened to us the Scriptures*" (Lk. 24. 32).

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS.

If this surface exegesis were consistent with itself the mischief wrought would not be so tragic. But the Bible itself is its own refutation of it. A few examples will suffice. For instance, "He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel" (Gen. 3. 15). One good brother may remark, "God does not state specifically that this is to be understood in any other sense than that of the strictly literal statement. Consequently the passage means that the seed of the woman was to crush the physical head of a serpent and in the process suffer similar injury to his own physical heel. And everybody else must understand it in the same way as I do, or he is not a believer, for evidently he does not believe the Bible." But another brother may feel privileged to put a somewhat different construction on the passage, rather more, he believes, in harmony with the

Spirit that inspired it and more in accord with the facts of its fulfilment. The same applies to many another passage. To deny this is to lay ourselves open to the charge made by Paul against the unbelieving Jews, "But unto this day whensoever Moses is read a veil lieth upon their heart" (2 Cor. 3. 15).

Again, "And thou shalt bind them (the commandments given) for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thy eyes" (Dt. 6. 8). The command is clear, and it is to the credit of the Pharisees that they were consistent and actually wore small boxes containing these words in writing on their wrists and on their foreheads. They were driven to it by their crass "hermeneutics." But is this exactly what God meant when He spoke — and still speaks — these words to us?

Again, when Jesus says, "I came to cast fire upon the earth," one brother may understand by "fire" physical fire, such as destroys our northern forests. And in defence of such a position he may add, "The Bible says 'fire', that is, natural fire, especially as it does not state that this is a parable, or that it is to be taken figuratively." Another brother may take the liberty to differ. Not with the Bible, but with the coarse realism of the exposition.

Again Jesus says, "He that hath none, let him sell his cloak and buy a sword" (Lk. 22. 36), and there is no statement in the context to the effect that this is to be taken in a spiritual sense. We recall the "interpretation" of the disciples when they said, "Lord, behold, here are two swords." One of these swords was in the hand of the impetuous Peter and he shortly proceeded to use it in very much the same manner as other equally sincere and equally misguided disciples have done since then in loyal "defense of Christ."

When Jesus warned His disciples to "take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees" (Mt. 16. 6), they immediately gave His words a literal meaning and "reasoned among themselves, saying, We took no loaves." We remember the almost impatient rebuke, "How is it that ye do not perceive that I spake not to you concerning loaves?" But here some friend will reply that Jesus *explained* that He was using figurative language. Yes; but evidently He had not intended to; nor did He explain till the surprising obtuseness of the disciples made it necessary. And suppose He had *not* explained, or that we had no record of an explanation, would we have no choice but to understand Him as referring to kitchen bread? Would not His words have continued to bear the same spiritual meaning, the meaning of His own

divine mind, even though the additional dialog had not followed?

Again, "If thine eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out and cast it from thee: it is good for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into the hell of fire" (Mt. 18. 9). No hint at all that these words are to be taken figuratively. Yet we do not find any of our modern literalists obeying the injunction in anything but a spiritual sense.

Compare also Peter's exposition of Ps. 16. 8–11 in his Pentecost sermon. (Acts 2. 25–31). As a sample of many similar New Testament quotations of Old Testament texts it will repay careful study.

The Pseudo-Fundamentalists not only persist in putting these limitations on the Word of God — not indeed on the instanced passages, but on many another passage — though they cannot help but see how inconsistent they are and how impossible the rule is of uniform application. They also presume to judge and condemn brethren who wish to save the Bible from being buried in this napkin and whose purpose is to make room for the larger faith and the deeper conviction which brings joy and peace to the hearts of men. This misguided perseverance is sometimes due to the policy of "safety first"; sometimes to a pet theory

which requires this means of vindication; sometimes to one or more blind-spots in their spiritual vision. But more often it is due to a most laudable fear of losing the childlike persuasion which is their all of faith. Deep conviction has no other choice than to contend earnestly for what appears to be the truth and the only truth, especially when jeopardized by "strange doctrine." "See that ye despise not one of these little ones" (Mt. 18. 10), these spiritual children. To rob them of their only interpretation would be to snatch the Bible out of their hands and leave them poor indeed. Our only contention is that they in turn do not insist on limiting *others* to these limitations. For this again would be to snatch the Bible out of the hands of those who believe in the same Bible as the inspired Word of God, but whose very faith compels them to apply the words of Isaiah 54. 2. "Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thy habitations; spare not: lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes."

To embalm the body of Scripture with the sweet spices of tradition ("as is the manner of the Jews to bury") may be both piety and faith. And those who adopt this manner of preserving what is left to them should not be denied this beautiful expression of devoted love. And yet, to make the

Scriptures only the final resting place of their hope and guard it with jealous fear of intrusion is hardly consistent with faith in the risen, living, and omnipotent Truth. There is a better foundation for faith than the stone of literalism before the door. There is no need to lament if it should prove to be rolled away. A Mary Magdalene may arrive at a hasty conclusion of her own and say, "They have taken away the Lord," but it will not be long till such souls as she, the other women, and the male disciples, will hear a familiar voice speak peace to their troubled souls.

THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS.

Before leaving this phase of Pseudo-Fundamentalism it may be of value to observe that many of these theories appear to have their source in the camp of the philosophical "Intellectualists", here represented by a certain type of Calvinist, legalist in spirit and rationalist in psychology. They must "understand," and make that understanding the criterion of truth, though Henri Bergson for one has shown how irrational this is and how impossible it is to lay hold of actual truth with the hand of mere logic or the crude tools of mechanical intellect. On the other hand, those who find the letter of Scripture transparent and luminous with a divine effulgence may

be classed with the "Voluntarists." The Intellectualist sees the Bible as the flat picture of, e. g., a great cathedral; the latter sees it as the cathedral itself and enters the sanctuary to pray. To the former the Bible is a concave dome, with suns, planets, and satellites all on the same surface; to the latter it is an infinite universe of solar systems in a perspective of vast spacial interrelations. The former climbs briskly up to its stars, plucks them down, sorts them, labels them, prices them, and markets them; the latter gazes up at the constellations of that same heaven in silent adoration and prostrates himself in worship at the feet of their Creator.

According to present indications it would seem as though the one group of voyagers were drifting into a position where the only choice is between the extremes of Pseudo-Fundamentalism or sceptic Modernism. Either means shipwreck. True faith, however, is not caught on the horns of this dilemma and the hope of a distracted and exhausted world is not reduced to these dread alternatives. But more of this later.

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVE.

The crying need of the hour is spiritual perspective. More than all things else we need the gift of that Spirit which opens our eyes to what

neither physical nor mental eye hath seen (1 Cor. 2. 9). The physical, the material, the literal, is assuredly not the only reality. As conductors of spiritual truth the senses are poor indeed. To say of anything material, "This is fundamental," is to deny the faith of Christ. To say that the spiritual is not real, and the far more real thing, is nothing less than to train our guns, in the name of the Christian faith, on the very stronghold of the Christian faith. The Spirit of Christ does not stop short at the surface of anything. It does not deny the truth of His own mind. On the contrary it makes the letter of Scripture diaphanous to a higher and a greater light and transparent to the deeply penetrating eye of faith. The throne of God stands on "a sea of glass like unto crystal" (Rev. 4. 6).

The damage done by what one writer calls "dementalized textarianism" may not appear at once, but the day is not far distant when literal strictures on single texts and larger portions of Scripture must cause the faith of many to wax cold. Meanwhile we should feel devoutly grateful for what God has preserved to us of our Protestant inheritance from the days of the Reformation. Eternal vigilance is still the price of liberty, but as yet we do not have our

views formulated for us by any curia, to find ourselves shut in, like goldfish circling in a glass globe, looking out into fields of divine truth through walls we cannot pass. Christian scholarship is not with us a stigma of disgrace. In the cases, numerous enough, where it has deviated, this is not infrequently the reaction of the instinct of self-preservation against the illiberal intolerance of the undiscerning. Where such scholarship might have been inspired by a spirit of piety and directed by deep devotion it is often estranged by the attitude of those who seem to think that their own opinion is a *ne plus ultra*, the final word. To create Modernism by maintaining a reactionary position, and then to condemn it and curse it, is surely not a service well pleasing to God. Such a course may indeed be in the interest of a dead, formal religion, but hardly in the interest of a vital Christianity and of the faith that overcometh the world.

PROGRESSIVE REVELATION.

Is there such a thing as "progressive revelation" in the Scriptures? The question has been raised and proves to be actual. It confronts us as a problem which concerns a living faith in the Bible and refuses to be dismissed with a gesture.

There is good reason for the contention of a certain type of Fundamentalists against it. A true instinct tells them that it may be a hole in the dike, threatening us with a devastating inundation. If the Bible is the Word of God, why is not every book, chapter, and verse of equal authority for all times? And who is to pass on the relative value of the different parts?

These Fundamentalists maintain that its contents are all on the same level; that every part is equally authoritative in its truth for our faith and in its ethics for our conduct; that the New Testament does not mark a higher stage of development, but that Leviticus and the Gospel of John, Ecclesiastes and the Apocalypse, are on exactly the same plane. Is this position tenable? Is a consistent application of this doctrine possible? Let us take a few cases in point.

In Dt. 25. 5–10 we read, "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no son, the wife of the dead shall not be married without unto a stranger; her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the first born that she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother that is dead, that his name be not blotted out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then

his brother's wife shall go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel; he will not perform the duty of a husband's brother unto me. Then the elders of the city shall call him, and speak to him; and if he stand, and say, I like not to take her; then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe off his foot, and spit in his face; and she shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto the man that doth not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed." Read also verses 11 and 12.

The same Law commands: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and who, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them, then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; and they shall say unto the elders of his city. This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voices; he is a glutton and a drunkard. And all the men of the city shall stone him with stones, that he die; so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear" (Dt. 21. 18–21).

Again, when the Law stipulates that the meat of an animal "that dieth of itself" may not be eaten by an Israelite, but may be sold to a foreigner (Dt. 14. 21), is it not evident that its ethics belong to an earlier age?

Now, these things are in the Bible. The Bible says so. But who among us is ready to step forth and declare that this code applies to-day just as it reads. Especially in view of the doubts raised by such passages in the mind of the average reader and the really serious difficulties which he encounters again and again. And when our theology teaches that this legislation is fulfilled in Christ and therefore no longer binding in the New Covenant, does it not thereby admit that this part of the Old Testament is superceded by a higher spiritual law and in so far concede that the claims of the "progressives" may be deserving of some consideration?

But how about the rest of the Old Testament? Take the following commands occurring in its sacred history: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from the gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor" (Ex. 32.27). Again, "Spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling" (1 Sam. 15. 3).

Even the most reactionary traditionalists are not ready to defend the position that such passages as these be applied literally to-day, or that they are to be placed on a par with, for instance, the words of Jesus in the Gospels.

Those who are acquainted with their Bibles know that such illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely, and in some instances with even graver moral import.

The subject requires a far more careful and extensive treatment than we can give it here. To sum the matter up in a few statements, it should be evident to every spiritual mind, that if the Bible is the Word of God its inspiration must be plenary. It must be replete with the divine life and light which in itself knows of no progressive development. There is no less of the Spirit of God in Genesis than in Matthew, no less of divine truth in Exodus and Leviticus than in Mark and Luke. The Holy Spirit does not "'grow."

But with regard to the *surface* meaning of the letter in which that revelation is couched, the case is different. The language of such passages as those instanced above, that is, the historical sense, is not the plane to which Christ would lift the Church of the New Covenant. In other words, spiritually there is no progressive revelation; historically there is a progressive revelation. If we

penetrate perpendicularly, so to speak, beneath the subsurface into the *spirit* of the Word, the fulness of God's revelation is present from the beginning and knows of no degree. But if we look at it horizontally, we can hardly fail to recognize a progressive development of its human medium and temporal language. There is therefore truth in the contention of both the schools of theology under consideration. The difference is in the angle of vision. Do we then make Scripture of none effect through this synthesis? God forbid; nay, we *establish* Scripture. Meanwhile the stars of God's Word shine on, even though some of His children should still believe that they are bright holes in the floor of its heaven. They continue to shed their divine radiance with equal impartiality on the path of all wayfaring men, whether these pilgrims homeward-bound are journeying on the quiet plains or voyaging on stormy seas. No matter what our *theories* may be about them, they are *God's creation.* "He made the stars also" (Gen. 1. 16).

SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE.

Another inconsistency appears in the attitude of the typical Pseudo-Fundamentalist toward certain theories of natural science. He is eminently right in protesting against the gross abuse which

is sometimes made of new discoveries, against a materialistic trend of scientific knowledge as applied science, against an irreligious bias on the part of many an educator, against the sapping process of rationalism going on in the Church itself. And this trend is so ominous that the inclination to wholesale condemnation is well nigh justifiable. "Rather no progress at all," the faithful feel at times, "than the threatened loss of what is far more precious than mere science."

And yet history proves that indiscriminate discarding of theories that are after all honest attempts to account for indisputable facts is at best only negatively in the interest of faith. And by emphasizing unduly the negative side we are in danger of inflicting fatal injury to positive truth of every kind. Nor will mere invective further the cause of Christ in the hearts and minds of the coming generation. Such uninformed zeal is even now causing serious harm to the struggling faith of our youth. Many of them are battling desperately to keep their faith amid the widening horizons of a new day. They are sincerely desirous to preserve a precious inheritance while acquiring actual knowledge. They are getting acquainted with the facts of astronomy, biology, geology and history, and then suddenly presented with the dread alternative, "Science, or the Bible!

You cannot have both!" The consequence is that mind and heart are rent asunder, and faith is often wrecked beyond repair.

A far better course would be to inform ourselves as far as may be; to accept tentatively such facts as appear to be clearly demonstrated; to see how far they can be harmonized with the Scriptures; and then be willing to share our convictions with those who need our assistance and look to us for guidance over possible stumbling-blocks in the path.

We who are a little older than our children should also bear in mind that after the age of forty on an average we hardly ever change our world-view or system of thought. Nor does the wiser and better element among our young people expect it. They do however expect, and they have a right to expect, that we do not attempt to inflict our obsolete science and medieval philosophy on them, and that we refrain from abusing them for entertaining diverging views in purely secular matters. For they have stepped into a world as different from ours as the sixteenth century was different from the twelfth. But meanwhile many of them are hoping and trusting that we will share with them our Bible, our Saviour, our Christian faith, our spiritual experience, our hope of salvation.

In so far as the natural sciences taught in our schools to-day tally with the facts of God's own handiwork, they cannot of course be wicked in themselves. Nor can the theological science taught in seminaries be wicked in itself, in so far as it tallies with the facts of the Bible. We have reason to believe that the true scientists in both fields are sincere in their desire to discover and to share with us nothing but the truth. In both fields however there are also men who are only would-be scientists, with whom "a little learning is a dangerous thing," both to themselves and to others. There are men whose hearts are wrong and who therefore can have no true vision in the head. Those who are strangers to God are unable to see the truth, not only spiritual truth but truth of any kind. They may know facts and yet be unable to distinguish between a fact and a truth. There are also teachers of the same stripe who are incapable of presenting scientific facts in their relation to truth in other fields of knowledge and who therefore misrepresent the former and leave pupils with entirely erroneous inferences, to say nothing of the relation of these facts to the truths of revealed religion. Outside of the schools we have the press and its Sunday articles which readers of this material are so easily deluded into believing to be the final word in "science." Much of

what appears in the popular magazines and in "the best sellers" is of the same misleading order.

Our real source of danger is therefore the *abuse* of the facts by irresponsible men, and the half-baked dough which is dished up in the name of science, not infrequently poisoned besides by the insinuations of sceptical minds. But also our own neglect to keep pace with the changes going on before our eyes and our failure to give our children the spiritual ballast which would keep their mental ship on an even keel. We have been working at the wrong end in the attempt to correct abuses by intemperate criticism, instead of bending our energies to create a spirit and a character that would grapple with each problem as it arises and incorporate the solution in a truly Christian philosophy of the world.

The situation being what it is, we should be grateful for the voices which are raised in warning against a tendency that is big with danger. Instead of permitting ourselves to be annoyed by those voices, it behooves us to give respectful attention to a spiritual instinct which is right in the main, even though words employed and methods adopted may not be all that we might desire. But as the cure for abnormal conditions is normal men, so the cure for misinformation is informed men, and the cure for anti-Christianity is Chris-

tian men. Only those who are informed, as well as Christian, and Christian, as well as informed, are "normal," and thus in position to offer real assistance in solving acute and distressing problems. It shows the present need of intelligent, educated, and spiritual-minded leadership in the Church, the School, and the State. Money-bags do not make good statesmen; pagans do not make good teachers; and Philistines do not make good churchmen.

THE NEED OF GUIDANCE.

But why discuss these matters at all? Would it not be wiser to refrain entirely from ventilating questions of this kind? The simple answer is, There is such a thing as conscience, there is such a thing as concern for souls. And when others far better equipped remain silent, and souls are being swept down the current before our very eyes, we have no other choice but to offer our services to those who will accept them.

There are young men and women by the thousands, open, honest minds. who are emerging out of the older forms of their childhood faith and who therefore are in imminent danger of losing that faith with the sloughing of these earlier forms. These young minds are not being properly cared for. It is difficult to assist them in a

really helpful way. Hence they are very much in need of friends who understand their mental problems and are willing to lend a hand. Early personal experiences of similar mental difficulties, observation at close hand of others who are stumbling along on the same paths, and the discoveries a teacher makes of the workings of the adolescent mind, are our sufficient warrant for rendering what we humbly trust may be of some assistance in climbing through the mists to the higher altitudes and wider prospects of revealed truth.

A mother may weep over the doubts of her growing son, a father may rave over his "nonsense," a companion may laugh at his scruples, but the heart of the young man himself may be crying out for *help*. Intellectual integrity is priceless to him. He loathes duplicity. He refuses to be an opportunist or a craven. But if some older friends steps into his life and shows him how to solve the intellectual problems that seem to stand in the way of his faith, there is strong probability that by the grace of God he will see his way clear to the solution of what is after all a *spiritual* problem. The faith of even one soul is moreover so precious that if a word here and there may be even only suggestive, it is worth whatever it may cost in the way of experiences that sadden our

mortal life. Such assistance is of course intended for those who may need it. and not for those who are above or beyond it.

B. THE MODERNISTS.

Of these there are again several kinds. In fact, there are all of the "57 varieties." But once more we discover a Right and a Left, and for our present purposes we shall discuss them under these two headings.

THE RIGHT WING.

There are men who are classed by the Pseudo-Fundamentalists as Modernists and Liberalists who at heart are true Fundamentalists. They accept all the foundation doctrines because these are a vital part of their Christian experience. In their daily conduct also they manifest the spirit of their Lord and Saviour. They are men of faith and men of prayer. They confess Christ in word and deed and walk worthily of the Gospel. Their hearts are the abode of the Holy Spirit, and they show a genuine concern for the salvation of their fellow-men.

But while they believe sincerely in the Bible as the inspired Word of God, they do not accept the forbidding literalism of the Pseudo-Fundamentalist, for the simple reason that they find it incon-

sistent with a spiritual faith, as well as contrary to the spirit of Scripture itself. Nor will they always agree to be bound by particular theories of inspiration which have no definition in the New Testament and never were made tests of fellowship in the Apostolic Church. They believe in the second coming of Christ, and in the imminence of that coming, but not all of them will accept as obligatory for faith the manner of that coming in every minute detail as laid down by those who arbitrarily constitute themselves a court of last appeal. They take this position, partly because they have taken pains to inform themselves and their integrity gives them no other choice, and partly because they find the truth so discovered quite consistent with the Bible's own interpretation of itself.

Dr. Jowett said, shortly before his death: "I yield to none in zealous guardianship and proclamation of the central and fundamental doctrines of the evangelical faith, and I think there was never a time when there was greater need for those doctrines to be proclaimed. It is imperative that we be solidly united in sacred loyalty to all truth that is essential to the regeneration and sanctification of the soul and the creation of men and women in Christ Jesus. But it is possible to so contend, even for central things, as to lose the

sense of relation and proportion; and by the manner of our controversy we may lose the clear sight of the supreme values. The first necessity of all vital and tenacious hold upon the evangelical verities, and of fruitful ministry in them, is the Spirit of the Lord Jesus. It is this Spirit and this alone that clarifies the atmosphere, removing the confusing, obscuring medium of suspicion, misunderstanding and unholy anger and resentment."

THE LEFT WING.

But there are also Modernists of a different color. These too are materialistic literalists, who miss entirely the spirit of the Scriptures, but at the opposite extreme of the Pseudo-Fundamentalists. For their rationalism is as much materialism in the last analysis as is the intellectualism of the orthodoxist. These liberalists secularize the sacred contents of Scripture. To them it is only so much literature of varying value. Its divine authority is practically nil. For an infallible Bible and an "'infallible" Pope they have substituted the "'infallibility" of scientists. They speak brave words about the spirit of the Scriptures, but they are like the undevout astronomer who claimed to have swept the heavens with his telescope and found no God. They dissect and dismember the body of Scripture and of course the

keen edge of their criticism fails to discover the soul. They make a pretense of keeping such parts of the Bible as seem to stand the test of natural reason and theological science, but gradually even these parts slip out of their grasp, like dry sand in a fist. Occasionally they attempt to save a remnant by a kind of spiritual interpretation of their own, which however only vaporizes and dissipates it. Almost every vital doctrine too is either openly denied, gutted by mental reservations, or garbled out of all semblance to the truth. "Liberalism in theology is a sickish dilution of orthodoxy. Fundamentalism is at least strong, even if it is blind. Liberal modernism can see farther than it dares to go. It is a coward at heart" (Professor Cushman). They are flippant of mind, adroit in the art of camouflage, and their mental habit is negation. The attitude they take toward the humble believer is one of cynical contempt or snobbish tolerance. For the spirit of prayer and any true missionary zeal we shall look in vain. "The command, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house,' they have changed to read, 'Believe in the progress of man onward and upward forever' by a free mechanical process" (Marshall Dawson). They are Pilates who ask, "What is truth?" and then deliberately turn their backs upon *the* Truth. Therefore they

also fail to recognize the background reflection of themselves in the mirror Paul holds up in 1 Cor. 1. 26–29, "For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are wise; and God chose he weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea, and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are: that no flesh should glory before God."

WHY THIS SPIRIT?

The reason for such a spirit is patent. Their faith is only intellectualism. They are lacking in religious experience. They are strangers to the Holy Spirit. And they have nothing to substitute for what they are taking away. They are, in short, blind leaders of the blind.

There may however be additional reasons. It may be that they have been driven into the dilemma of choosing between the reactionary attitude of the Pseudo-Fundamentalists and — nothing. For this is the alternative presented to many a sincere and distracted mind to-day. Certainly this

was not the only choice, but there is a possibility that a third choice did not appear to them.

Another cause may be a church-machinery Christianity, on the one hand, and an emotion-revival Christianity, on the other, both of which history shows go swiftly to seed in a hollow travesty of religion. The natural fruit of the one is orthodoxism and formalism, and that of the other is rationalism and anomianism. The one trend reappears in Pseudo-Fundamentalism; the other in modern Liberalism. Both are head-religion; the one looking back to the past with a closed mind; the other looking forward with sightless eyes; the one resting on human authority, the other building on the shifting sands of secular knowledge, — neither one penetrating with the eyes of a living faith to the heart and spirit of revealed truth, the heart and spirit of Christ.

Regardless however of the causes, with or without a name, the fact remains that if this Liberalist movement comes into the ascendency and takes the lead in the Church, the end is unbelief and lawlessness, while it is equally true that if Pseudo-Fundamentalism takes the lead, the end is paralysis and dry-rot. In the one case, no Church at all; in the other case, a mortuary chapel. Meanwhile we must be on our guard lest the Church invite an attitude of indifference, or at best be

regarded with tolerance and patronage, as though she were "a sort of institutional grandmother, worthy of affection and care, but not capable of functioning in a vigorous and vital way. Religion is absolute and imperial in its very genius. It cannot be dependent. Its royalty and universality are inherent. When they go, it ceases to live."

According to present indications Sadduceeism and Pharisaism will continue to exist for awhile side by side, growing ever more hostile and bitter toward each other. In the end, however, history will repeat itself, first in a combined attack on the Spirit of the Christ "without the camp" of both factions, and then in the fury of a mutual war that shall undermine the resistance of the organized Church and usher in another and still more fearful "destruction of Jerusalem."

THE SOLUTION.

This "destruction" may be the final "solution," heralding the coming of the King and His Kingdom. Prophecy looks in this direction and outlines such a consummation. Any other solution may therefore be nothing short of unbelief flying in the face of God. But in the event that some of us may not be reading the signs of the times aright, other solutions may deserve at least a passing consideration.

One proposed solution is to combine Pseudo-Fundamentalism and Pseudo-Modernism in a complete and balanced whole. A little acquaintance with the spirit of each will show that the prospects of such a possibility are nothing short of hopeless. The inherent incompatibility of the two is that of oil and water. A reconciliation between these extremists would involve the surrender of principles which both regard as essential. The differences are nothing less than opposing views of life. A liberal organ, "The Christian Century," says that the issue "goes to the very roots of religious conviction and involves the basic purpose and almost the genius of Christianity itself. The differences are not mere surface differences, but are foundation differences, structural differences, amounting in their radical dissimilarity almost to the differences between two distinct religions."

The public debates which are being held by representatives of the opposing camps are sufficient evidence of this. The heart grows sick with misgivings when we pick up a morning paper and read the scare headline, "Bible Not Inspired," even though we know that the debate was not on the question of its inspiration at all, but on differing *theories* of Inspiration. Such discussions only make the issue sharper and bring the schism nearer — which indeed, from a higher point of

view, may be highly desirable. For in spite of all amenities these "mills" are no academic conversations, but a fight to the finish. And no matter who "wins," his victory is a defeat for both, especially as neither side has a fair opportunity to emphasize essentials that both may be supposed to have in common, but must use the limited time in antagonizing each other and in exposing the glaring mistakes of the opposition.

The general public too is growing weary of the contention. While they may not appreciate the issues involved, they do feel that "it is not the fault of one that two quarrel." They feel that the strife is entirely aside of the point as far as their true interests are concerned. It does not feed their souls, and it does not guide their feet into the way of peace, nor does it marshal the hosts of Christ to fight the common enemy. There may be those who enjoy the spectacle of a religious prize-fight, but there are also souls who turn away from such a scene with horror. The former are the yelling rooters of both factions; the latter are the disciples of Him who says, "Let the tares grow with the wheat until the harvest." Both should be old enough to know that neither seventeenth century orthodoxism nor eighteenth century "Enlightenment" will save us. A larger number among "the remnant" than many of us sup-

pose are even beginning to ask in all seriousness, "Is the time at hand for the simple followers of Christ to go forth and become a 'church in the wilderness'?"

A second proposition is to steer clear of both Right and Left in each camp, avoid the pitfalls on either side, and walk serenely neutral in the middle of the road. But this too is impossible. For both of the larger groups, no matter how much they differ in manner of approach, do harbor certain essentials that are indispensable to a complete and properly functioning Christianity. That is, the Fundamentalists have the content of faith, even though it sometimes be in the form of a cyst, and without this content Modernism is only so much vapor. The Modernists, again, represent the shift in the center of gravity which has taken place in the modern Renaissance of natural, philosophical, and theological science, and which offers forms in which the old faith must be restated in order to become a reviving power in a disintegrating world.

In a similar vein a representative of Modernism, Dr. R. C. Smith, says, "The reason why we find ourselves on different sides is because fifty years ago the Bible began to be examined critically, to see how it was made and to find out what it really said. This Bible, as we have seen,

means everything; it is the record of the revelation of Jesus Christ, upon whom the hope of the world depends. The Fundamentalist said: 'You can not touch it. Leave it alone. You critics are going to destroy our Bible and the faith of good people. Do away with its authority, and you kill hope.'

"Now the Fundamentalists are right in saying that no hands shall hurt the Book where millions of men find life; they are right in saying that the men who examine it shall not destroy it. But the Modernist answers the Fundamentalist and says: 'We have such faith in the light and life and spirit that we have found within the Bible that nothing can destroy it. Let us find out all about it; how it was written in the blood of men and in the blood of Jesus Christ; let us strike down deep to the authority of the spirit of the Book.' And the Modernist also claims that his willingness to examine the Bible critically has been vindicated; for the men who have examined it have shown it to be a greater book than men dreamed of, with more authority than it ever had before. The discussion is not between a body of men who uphold the faith of the Church and another body of men who would undermine it or who would 'whittle down the creed to fit a dwindling faith'; it is between loyal men on both sides

who want the Church to do its largest work in the best way." We recognize the phraseology of the Modernist; and still his words may be deserving of some consideration as indicating an occasional tone and temper in the movement.

Those who can approach each other in the manner indicated will find that the Christians in the two camps no more represent two religions than the two ends of a stick constitute two sticks. They will also find that the truth in both will blend into one, because frequently it is the same truth looked at from different angles. It is true that the two factions travel different roads which do not converge. But to say that they have nothing in common and that there are not elements in each which could and should be combined, is to take a superficial view. The mental attitude of the extremists is sharply antagonistic, but deep down in the soul of both there is often, if we care to look for it, a real unanimity of purpose. To be sure, the differences are by no means superficial; but careful and unbiased examination will show that many of the differences belong rather to the sphere of theology than to essential Christianity.

Certainly it is difficult to make clear distinctions here. The very attempt may seem like obliterating distinctions, or like a side-step to

avoid or befuddle the issues. But the fact remains that the degrees of difference are so numerous, and so extensive, that there is not the easy cleavage which we should like to find, or use our axes to make. The real dividing line is the regenerate heart rather than any intellectual test or doctrinal touch-stone. The separating Judge is the Spirit of Christ. But for this very reason it is not so impossible as it would seem for kindred souls with a common Christian experience to compare notes, make mutual contributions, supply deficiencies, join forces in defense of what shall appear to be the truth, and unite efforts in serving the real cause of the one and the same Saviour.

A third solution is therefore, not *neither,* nor *either-or,* nor *all of both,* but *some of each* in a *new* creation of God which He alone can organize and inspire by His Holy Spirit. A soul is seeking a body, and a body is seeking a soul. Fundamentalism of the genuine kind affords the soul, and Liberalism of the corresponding kind offers the material of a body. This means that to some extent the former may lack an adequate organic medium for touching, influencing, and directing a new generation in a new world. It means also that the latter may have lost its soul and is in need of the spiritual regeneration which alone can convert a pagan into a Christian.

It may indeed be that this is not possible on the hither side of the consummation of the age. The time, we repeat, may not be at hand for a solution even of the third kind. A cataclysm may be inevitable. It may be necessary that we first suffer shipwreck in our proud self-confidence, in order that faith may experience a complete translation from the temporal things which are seen to the eternal things which are not seen. It may be that once more God has "judged" the past, to make room for a new age.

Nevertheless it must remain true that some higher synthesis is both possible and desirable. In fact, such a synthesis is absolutely necessary. To men of vision it is growing ever clearer that without a new form and a new spirit in that form the prospect is a catastrophe which can end only in the "blackness of darkness." It may be that Fundamentalism is impotent, and that Modernism is barren. It may be that a senile Church is now "well stricken in years." But there is a God in heaven who is able to redeem His promises. The days of *His* miracles are not past. While possessing our souls in patience it is the plain duty of both leaders and followers in each of these movements to inform themselves, particularly in the fields where each is least acquainted. A prejudice that fights shy of possible facts for

fear that these may upset traditional views and disturb our mental equilibrium should give place to honest research, in the full assurance that truth is not the enemy of truth. Shutting our eyes and screaming at what we do not understand is not good generalship. Nor is it a convincing confession of faith. Luther dared to face the facts of criticism because of the strength of his faith in the Bible itself. And neither he nor we have suffered in consequence. Those of us to whom truth must be taught by others, because not much truth will ever be revealed to us, must keep our minds open to accept truth from whatever source it may come, so long as it appeals to our intelligence, our Christian experience, a live conscience, and a faith illumined by the Word of God. Denying the facts or the inference of the facts does not establish us in the faith. It only establishes us in our own traditional opinions and views.

PRESENT NEEDS.

It would be most salutary to real progress if the respective contenders would arrive at a mutual understanding of definitions and terms. So much of our misunderstanding is due simply to a lamentably loose use of words and phrases. And here the Modernists are most at fault. Certainly words often take the place of ideas with the Fun-

damentalists. But even more frequently the Modernists employ expressions which they know do not truly convey their own views.

Mutual intercession for each other, not forgetting to pray for ourselves, that Christ would shed abroad upon us a larger measure of His Spirit, would more than all things else pave the way for an approximation of enlightened Fundamentalists and believing Progressives, with material benefit to both. The Pseudo-Fundamentalists indeed call their own spirit the Holy Spirit, but this is not the answer to the prayer we have in mind. And the false Modernists either do not pray at all, or are not able to receive "the promise of the Father," because they are strangers to a saving faith.

The Spirit of Christ breathes upon us a spirit of humility and a spirit of love. It is the Spirit that inspired such words as these, "Every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire" (Mt. 5. 22). "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (Jn. 13. 35). The Baptist Convention at Atlantic City adopted as its motto, "Agreed to Differ but Resolved to Love."

We all need the reminder that prophecy, knowledge, impoverishing ourselves for the poor, and martyrdom itself, are all as nothing without love (1 Cor. 13. 1–3).

That same Spirit also makes us free and prompts us to respect the freedom of the brother. "For freedom did Christ set us free; stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5. 1), whether it be, as here, the yoke of the law, or the yoke of Pharisaism, or the yoke of Sadduceeism. No spiritual fruit was ever produced by coercion. To bind the brain and gag the mouth is to render static the intellectual life and faith of all, pastors and teachers included. It leads to pretense and crawfishing and to a general cowardice in thinking and expression because of which men are afraid to give the hot truth straight from their hearts. It makes them inhibit their honest convictions, to look around instead for some canned article with a special label to commend it.

This was not the attitude of the prophets, the apostles, the reformers, and it should not be the spirit of the Church which has been the Church of education and knowledge, of freedom of speech and conscience, of faith and love. It is to be hoped that this Church will continue to prove strong enough to include, as does the Bible itself, various

types of personality and various modes of thinking, and not be a one-track affair which excludes all minds that do not run in a single groove. To stand still is to go to seed. If the Spirit of Christ is our motive power we may safely leave the direction to Him. It will not serve the purpose to-day to make of the church "a limousine which we decorate with a bouquet of cut-flowers, when the batteries are dead."

With respect to human authority we do not believe in gravitation because of Newton, nor do we accept the atomic theory because of Dalton, nor the X-ray because of Roentgen, nor the facts of radium because of the Curies. We accept them because they "work" and because they serve, or can be made to serve, the interests of mankind. The spirit which would drive pastors out of pulpits and professors out of their chairs because of purely scientific views and their inescapable inferences is a piece of conceit and affrontery so astounding in our age that fair-minded men turn away with a feeling of humiliation and shame. To taunt progressive men to pick up and leave if the fulminations of reactionaries do not please them is to confuse the identity of the Church or of their own particular denomination with the identity of their own group. This spirit is of one piece with that of the hundred-per cent patriot-

eers who tell political progressives that if they do not like a Teapot Dome government they are at liberty to leave the country. It is the spirit of the reactionary king Louis XIV who said (rendered in the vernacular): "The State, that's *me*." This was the spirit and attitude moreover that brought on the Revolution.

Over against this presumption *"The Lutheran"* strikes a sane note: "Many sects have held fast to little points on the circumference of the Christian faith and have lost their hold on the great center of Gospel truth. There is need of much earnest searching of Scripture to learn afresh what is clearly revealed. There is need of casting overboard half-truths based on a few pet passages of Scripture to the exclusion of what other passages have to say. The evangelicals must not be indifferent to history and scholarship, but must become masters in this field. They must establish their claim as defenders of the Gospel on more solid ground than sentiment and fervor, and show that they are not averse to growth and progress in sacred knowledge. Here is a case where there can be no real peace until the issue is clearly faced and met."

CONCLUSION.

What we have attempted to say in the preceding pages — pleading for our diffusion the nebulous nature of the subject — serves to show, if no more, that the question is still an open one and by no means presents the alternative of either Pharisaism or Sadduceeism. If this dread alternative were all that is left to us, the author for one would have to be counted with those who after all have preserved the essentials of the true faith, even though some of these essentials appear to be hidden away under the soil of a well-kept cemetery. In our presentation, however, we have deliberately leaned in the other direction, but only in an instinctive move to recover the balance of the boat in which we are voyaging. For it cannot be denied that the craft has taken a rather serious list to port.

In the language of another figure, the really important thing is the *home;* but there can surely be no harm in adding some "modern improvements" to the *house.* Nor need the family life be disrupted if the younger members should choose to use a different language from that of their parents. That is to say, if a new generation in the Church should employ a modern tongue in expressing the same old saving truths of the past.

As the language question has at times caused serious dissension in local congregations, so a corresponding change in the language of theology may prove to be provocative of contention. There is, however, no good reason why it should produce a split in the household of faith. Against such a possibility we of course must contend, not with a "zeal that is not according to knowledge," but yet with all the ardor of the Spirit of Christ. If we hold to the essentials, though language may vary, and make our theology Biblio-centric and Christo-centric, there is little danger of the eccentricity which would "fly off at a tangent" in either of the opposite directions. And the conservation of such conservatism will find its keynote in the confession of Paul: "The life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2. 20).

We are not committed to the impossible choice between Pseudo-Fundamentalism and naturalistic Modernism. Something very different from both is certain to emerge out of the present strife and confusion. Unless indeed the clash marks the end of the age. And even so, history would indicate that the close of one æon signalizes the beginning of a new æon. As in the past, converging lines of development point to the rise of a *new* group

of "disciples" consisting of Fundamentalists in the true sense of the term, — those who have experienced the essential truths of the Christian religion in their own lives, but who also have recognized the formal truths of new discoveries in the visible universe of God and above all in the still greater universe of His revelation. These are the souls who will give heed to Conservatives and Progressives alike, because they realize that, for the very conservation of its life, to say nothing of its progress, the Church must have not only ecclesiastical "priests" of the past but also spiritual "prophets" of the future.

This group has not come to the fore as yet. They are still scattered in a Dispersion. They are still waiting for the "pentecost" that shall unite them into a vitally organic body. "Yet the vision is for many days." Its realization, however, is the hope of a distracted world. Meanwhile we rest assured that the providence of God is perfect and that His promises will not fail.

"Around our incompleteness, His completeness;
Around our restlessness, His rest."

We may live to see that "even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall," but also that "they that wait for Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall

mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint" (Is. 40. 30, 31).

To employ once more an old but serviceable figure, Fundamentalism may be said to represent the protecting covering of an acorn that is to fall into the ground and die; Modernism represents the frosts which in the providence of God shall crack the shell, release the hidden germ of truth, and make possible the resurrection of its inhering life. The Word of God will supply the nourishing soil; the warm rains of His Spirit will provide the moisture and sap; the Sun of Righteousness will quicken the kernel and cause it to sprout; and in the fulness of the time the branches of a towering tree will bear the leaves that are for the healing of the nations. In that day the Church of God "shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not wither; and whatsoever he (it) doeth shall prosper" (Ps. 1. 3).

Glancing back over the traveled road we are reminded of a familiar fable, which may serve as our summary and terminus:

A blind man, large of body and strong of limb, was groping his uncertain way along a country road to a distant village. A small cripple had

essayed the same journey earlier in the day, but his strength had failed him and he was sitting by the roadside in despair of ever arriving at his destination. Catching sight of the blind man he hailed him and told of his predicament. The result of the conference was a proposition by the blind man to carry the cripple, with the understanding that the latter direct the way. The offer was gratefully accepted, and in due course of time the combination came swinging into town, the cripple astride the shoulders of the blind man, the strength of the one and the eyes of the other serving for both.

"Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea. And he said unto them, Therefore every scribe, who has been enrolled as a disciple in the kingdom of the heavens and instructed as such, is like unto the master of a household, who bringeth out of his stores things both new and old" (Mt. 13. 51, 52).

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